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# Inside Information

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**INSIDE INFORMATION** is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Individual items are sent electronically throughout the month to offices on the agricultural information network on the Dialcom Incorporated computer system. These items are then printed at the end of the month for distribution to all offices, including those which do not have access to the Dialcom mail network. Any items, comments or inquiries should be sent to Denver Browning, Editor, Special Programs Division, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or send to Browning's Dialcom mailbox AGR209, or call at (202) 447-2058. Communicators with USDA agencies, Land-Grant Universities and State Departments of Agriculture are encouraged to submit items to the editor for inclusion in both the electronic and printed versions.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Although timely in the electronic version, some job announcements may reach you too late in hard copy due to the shortness of deadlines. Our policy is to include all electronic items in the end-of-month hard copy.

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**USDA’S SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN IN KANSAS SETS STAGE**

Ninety percent of the landowners in Kansas participate in USDA programs. The State Soil Conservation Service (SCS) public affairs section developed an information and education campaign in 1987 to ensure that every landowner who wanted to maintain his or her eligibility for USDA programs had the opportunity.

This campaign, directed to 105 individual conservation districts, and with guidance from the State Conservation Commission (SCC), was accomplished in two phases.

The first phase was designed to inform landowners with highly erodable land of their options under the Food Security Act of 1985 and of their need to develop conservation plans to comply.

Phase II, currently in progress, is an information effort for the implementation of the finished plans plus educational programs in residue management.

Funding for a local information campaign was provided by SCS after a conservation district signed a cooperative agreement with SCS, designed the campaign, and calculated the budget. A district campaign included meetings (both general and special—such as women’s group meetings), newsletters, newspaper ads, poster displays, fair booths, monthly conservation pages and/or conservation editions in local newspapers, interviews, and public service announcements on local radio stations.

It also covered information surveys to measure the effect of these activities on the public.

In Phase I, the SCC and 82 of the 105 conservation districts completed information plans. The SCC and 87 conservation districts have initiated information plans for Phase II, targeted for completion this coming fall.

The initial step each district made in designing the individual plans was completed through a series of strategic information planning worksheets.

This process was designed to help districts choose objectives with reasonable bounds, communicate the proper message to precise constituencies, project a result, and measure the effectiveness of the desired goals.

Using the worksheets helped the districts to focus their information resources where they did the most good in their areas and to concentrate on ideas and solutions.

One of the suggestions on the worksheets was that a “specialized” meeting be targeted to women. Although SCS programs and services are offered to all on a nondiscriminatory basis, some people believe farm meetings are just for men.

The Smith County District planned a meeting for 35-40 women. Two meetings and 146 women later, the conservation district was patching the holes in the “farm meetings are just for men” theory.

It became obvious that women also have a vital interest in agriculture and farm affairs, and they wanted to know the conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act and how these provisions pertained to their own land.

One district conservationist was overwhelmed by the response to the meetings. The women were informed that they are an important part of SCS’ public.

Many of the women cooperators were unaware of the activities and programs of the conservation district, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and SCS.

During the meetings, both SCS and ASCS employees explained their office operations and where to go to get more information.

For further information about the Kansas SCS information and education campaign, contact: Tim Christian, SCS public affairs specialist, Salina, KS, at 913-823-4570.

**U. OF MISSOURI AND USDA’S CSRS PUBLISH BROCHURE ON EXPERIMENT STATION SYSTEM**

The University of Missouri, in cooperation with USDA’s Cooperative State Research Service, has published a brochure on the State Agricultural Experiment Station System.

The new brochure, “Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow,” is being distributed in bulk to cooperating state institutions.

Copies are available by sending a self-addressed label to: Fennie Tolver, CSRS-USDA, Room 328 Aerospace Building, Washington, DC 20250-2200.



## **USDA'S EDI POLICY BOARD VOTES FOR MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN ONLINE SERVICE**

At their June 29 meeting, members of USDA's EDI (Electronic Dissemination of Information) Policy Board—composed of administrators of the 13 agencies loading reports and releases into the online service—voted for major improvements in USDA's EDI service. The EDI service is USDA's premier current information online service.

The board voted to:

—lower the monthly minimum from \$150 “to the lowest possible rate not to exceed \$75.” Firms bidding on a new contract to take effect October 1, reported a \$75 per month minimum was as low as they could go. However, the board's wording allows the winning contractor to lower the minimum if this could expand the service.

—to give “Level 2” service to “Level 1” subscribers. The contractor can do this basically with the flip of a switch. Almost all Level 1 (private industry) subscribers have asked that reports be broken up, for many reasons. This move will allow them to have both Level 1 and Level 2 (federal and state government) access at no additional charge and without requiring additional effort by loading agencies.

—to make service available on federal holidays and Saturdays. While most news and information services retrieve USDA information as soon as it's available in the EDI system, some need access beyond federal work days. Operating hours will remain the same on the new schedule, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET.

The lower monthly minimum will start October 1, when the new contract begins. The other improvements will take effect as soon as USDA and the current contractor can put them into operation.

The USDA agency administrators also heard a report describing how they could move some of their postage funds over to EDI after culling their mailing lists. (See: INSIDE INFORMATION, June 1989, “Alternative to Postage”). This is a move that has great potential for saving money otherwise spent on postage, expanding the EDI service by making greater resources available and getting current information to news organizations—and to the public—faster.

The administrators reaffirmed their intentions to make the EDI service the primary system to move current information to the public and began an effort to develop official policy for the program. They also indicated a desire to expand the role of the board to oversight of all forms of electronic dissemination of information.

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## **USDA'S FSIS PLANNING SPECIAL EDITION OF 'FOOD NEWS FOR CONSUMERS' MAGAZINE**

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is planning a special edition of its quarterly magazine FOOD NEWS FOR CONSUMERS. The Winter 1990 issue (due off press the beginning of December for distribution the beginning of January) will focus on “The State of Food Safety.”

Some of the topics to be covered include communicating risk about food safety, an overview of who protects the food supply, a photo-feature explaining how meat and poultry are inspected, an analysis of how FSIS handles a recall situation, and how FSIS tests for residues in meat and poultry products.

Because Food News is a subscription publication, FSIS is not able to distribute complimentary copies to those outside the media. If USDA agencies are interested in receiving copies of this special edition of Food News they can ride the print order. For more information, contact Laura Fox, chief of the Public Awareness office at 202-447-9351.

For those outside USDA, now is the time to subscribe to FOOD NEWS to insure receipt of the Winter issue. The cost is \$5.00 for four issues. To subscribe, send your check, purchase order or VISA or MasterCard account number to Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402-9371.

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## **'EATING RIGHT...THE DIETARY GUIDELINES WAY' CAMPAIGN KICKED OFF BY USDA'S HNIS**

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service (HNIS) has kicked off a new campaign called “Eating Right...The Dietary Guidelines Way,” by releasing four new consumer booklets containing advice on how to shop for foods, fix quick meals, eat out, and enjoy snacks for a healthier diet.

Other information includes planning menus, preparing foods, and making bag lunches and desserts.

Susan Welsh, director of HNIS' Nutrition Education Division, said the Dietary Guidelines can simplify food choices for Americans who have busy lifestyles and hectic work and travel schedules.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are: eat a variety of foods; maintain desirable weight; avoid too much fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol; eat foods with adequate starch and fiber; avoid too much sugar; avoid too much sodium; and if you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

The four new booklets are: "Preparing Foods and Planning Menus Using the Dietary Guidelines" (\$2.50, Item No. 172-V), "Making Bag Lunches, Snacks and Desserts Using the Dietary Guidelines" (\$2.50, Item No. 173-V), "Shopping for Food and Making Meals in Minutes Using the Dietary Guidelines" (\$3.00, Item No. 174-V), and "Eating Better When Eating Out Using the Dietary Guidelines" (\$1.50, Item No. 175-V).

To order the publications, write to the Consumer Information Center, Department 70, Pueblo, CO 81009. Specify title and item number, and enclose a check or money order payable to the Superintendent of Documents.

For further information on the campaign, contact: Dianne Odland or Eileen Newman at 301-436-5724.

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#### **'FFA TODAY' TELEVISION PROGRAM DEBUTS IN SEPTEMBER AS MONTHLY VIDEO MAGAZINE**

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) will be premiering a new television show, FFA Today, this fall. The first program is tentatively scheduled to air on September 23.

The one-hour show, covering FFA and agriculture, is the result of a June 12 agreement between the National FFA Organization and Heartland Communications of Shawnee Mission, Kansas. Heartland will produce, distribute, and promote the program with input provided by FFA.

Each show will follow a video-magazine format, with four or five feature stories videotaped on location. There will regular monthly departments; current topics in such areas as agriscience, marketing, and international agriculture; and issues concerning the environment, careers, education, and FFA activities.

The target audience for FFA Today includes FFA members, young people, teachers, parents, and leaders in education, government, and industry.

The broadcast will be carried by independent and affiliate television stations. Current plans are to air the show the third weekend of each month.

For further information, contact: William Stagg (703-360-3600) or Jerry Duff (816-891-8845).

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#### **OKLAHOMA STATE U. HAS OPENING FOR A PRODUCER/DIRECTOR IN AG COMMUNICATIONS**

Oklahoma State University, in Stillwater, has an opening for a senior television producer/director of Agricultural Communications. This person would serve as the producer/anchor for "Sunup," a daily television program aimed at farm families and consumers.

Requirements include experience and knowledge of agriculture and rural life, relating well with the public both on and off camera, experience in on-camera work and in program production. Travel throughout Oklahoma also is required.

Qualifications are a BS degree and three years experience in television, including on-camera reporting and producing.

Salary is open, with consideration given to education and experience. Other benefits are a retirement program, group medical and hospital insurance, and annual and sick leave.

Applications will be accepted until September 1, or until a suitable candidate is found. To apply, send resume, audition tape and three reference letters to: Kevin Hayes, Head, Department of Agricultural Communications, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-4081

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#### **OKLAHOMA STATE U. HAS OPENING FOR AN ASSISTANT EDITOR IN AG COMMUNICATIONS**

Oklahoma State University, in Stillwater, has an opening for an assistant professor/assistant editor in Agricultural Communications.

Duties include teaching two classes assigned by the Director of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, serving as academic advisor to approximately 30 students majoring in Agricultural Communications, and overseeing the work of four to eight students assigned to internships.

Other duties include identifying and writing news and feature stories on subjects of special interest and significance. The individual in this position must develop and maintain awareness of media needs as they relate to resident instruction programs of the college and serve as liaison between the College of Agriculture and the commu



nications media of the state and region, while also maintaining a close working relationship with faculty and students in planning information programs.

Qualifications are master's degree; demonstrated skill and practical experience in journalism, agricultural communications, or a related area; and demonstrated ability to work well with people and relate effectively to the general public.

Salary is open, with consideration given to education and experience. Other benefits are a retirement program, group medical and hospital insurance, and annual and sick leave.

Applications will be accepted until August 15, 1989, or until a suitable candidate is found. To apply, send a letter of application, resume, transcripts, names and addresses of three references, and samples of published work to: Kevin G. Hayes, Head, Department of Agricultural Communications, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-4081.

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## **FORMER WASHINGTON POST AG REPORTER WINS TOP AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS AWARD**

The Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE), the oldest and largest organization in the United States for agricultural communicators, will present its prestigious Reuben Brigham Award on July 19 to Ward Sinclair, formerly the agricultural reporter for THE WASHINGTON POST.

Named for a former ACE president, it is the highest award ACE gives a non-member. It has been awarded yearly since 1947.

Sinclair will receive the award during ACE's International annual meeting in Portland, Ore., July 16-19.

Sinclair, who now runs the Flickerville Mountain Farm and Groundhog Ranch near Dott, Pa., is being honored for his outstanding coverage of agriculture. He still writes an occasional "Truckfarm" column for the Post. He came to the Post in 1977 from the Louisville Courier-Journal. After covering Congress, Sinclair became the Post's farm writer in 1981. "I thought I was being punished when the Post assigned me to cover agriculture," he recalls. "It turned out to be the best beat I ever had."

What began for Sinclair as the dabbling of weekend gardening in 1983 is now a daily sunrise-to-sunset cultivation of 70 vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers on the 65 acre farm.

Born at Bloomington, Ill., Sinclair received a B.A. in Spanish from Mexico City College and a M.A. in Spanish literature and philosophy from the National University of Mexico.

He was a reporter for the DAILY PANTOGRAPH, Bloomington, Ill., the MEXICO CITY NEWS, the WICHITA EAGLE, the TAMPA TIMES, the LOUISVILLE TIMES, and the Courier-Journal and Louisville Times Washington Bureau before he came to work at The Washington Post.

The Newspaper Farm Editors Association gave Sinclair their News Editor of the Year award in 1984. He has won numerous other reporting awards.

This year's ACE Professional Award (presented yearly since 1973) will be given to Ralph J. Ballew, leader of extension information at Mississippi State University.

Winners of the ACE Awards of Excellence (awarded since 1976 by Special Interest Groups) are: Richard Lee, University of Missouri (Communication Administration); Margaret Ezell, University of Georgia (Computers); Tyson Gair, Mississippi State University (Electronic Media); Tom Tate, USDA Extension Service (Interactive Video); Don Esslinger, University of Missouri (International Affairs); Marcella M. Hilt, USDA Radio-TV Division (Media Relations); Joann Pierce, University of Florida (Publications); Duane Dailey, University of Missouri (Teaching/Training); Gene Allen, University of Oklahoma (Teleconferencing); and Andy Duncan, Oregon State University (Writing).

The ACE Pioneer Award (awarded yearly since 1957) winners are Tyson Gair (Mississippi State University) and Charlotte Murphy (University of Nebraska).

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## **FSIS REOPENING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR DES MOINES REGIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST**

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service is reopening its announcement for a GS-1035-12 regional public affairs specialist. The public affairs specialist, one of five, reports to the chief of the agency's public awareness office in Washington, DC.

Duties include developing outreach programs to promote food safety education, media liaison, contacts with consumer and industry groups, and other public affairs activities which support the regional director, such as employee communication, and drafting speeches and Congressional correspondence.

For a copy of the vacancy announcement, FSIS-M-264 (89), and other forms required to apply for this position, contact the FSIS personnel office in Minneapolis at 612-370-2034. The application period closes August 14.

For more information about the position, call Laura Fox, chief of the Public Awareness Office at 202-447-9351.

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#### **U. OF IDAHO COMMUNICATIONS HEAD ASSUMING NEW POSITION AT WASHINGTON STATE**

Scott V. Fedale, head of the Ag Communications Center at the University of Idaho, is leaving Idaho to accept a new position.

As of August 7, he will assume the position of chair, Information Department and Computer Resources Unit at the College of Agriculture and Home Economics, Washington State University.

Fedale will be joining John Francis, senior video producer in the Information Department. They worked together in Idaho for eight years.

Fedale will be directing the activities of 14 faculty and 25 staff involved in computer resources, publications, news, video, and radio support services.

Bill Stellmon will be assuming the department head position at Idaho on an interim basis.

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#### **RETIRED USDA COMMUNICATOR TELLS PANEL ON ETHICS THEY NEED TO MEET AND DEAL**

Hal Taylor, retired USDA director of public affairs and a long-time member and national coordinator of the Agricultural Communicators in Education, told ACE members they should meet routinely—even socially—with scientists and other researchers so each could get to know more about how the others do their work.

Taylor was part of a panel on ethics and science communication at ACE's international meeting at Portland, Ore., July 16-19. Part of the discussion centered on problems communicators have when researchers and heads of their organizations want to withhold information from the public. Communicators on the panel said they thought researchers often seem reluctant to share their organization's information with the public, though they developed it with the public's money.

One information person on the panel spoke of the ethics of being told not to release information on her state's aflatoxin outbreak even though the public needed to know about it and the information office in the next state was releasing its information on the outbreak.

A researcher countered saying researchers often didn't have all the facts together and were reluctant to give what they had to news media for fear they would disturb the public through premature reporting. They fear reporters will not understand the story and will upset the public.

Several university administrators and scientists on the panel complimented the reporter who was on the panel. Because they knew him, had been interviewed by him and had read his stories, they said he was a good reporter and they wished all reporters were as fair and good as him. It was apparent to the audience that once scientists get to know reporters, they can see which are honest and fair and they could work with them. It was also apparent that media relations is an area where scientists need information people to help them.

Taylor said researchers should spend more time with information people—perhaps over dinner and similar functions—so each could learn more about how the others do their jobs. Then researchers could learn that information officers know how to effectively release information and the communicators could learn why program staff sometimes feel they need to withhold information from the public.

ACE, founded in 1913, is the oldest of the seven professional agricultural communications organizations in the United States. It is an international organization with about 700 members in several countries.

Members of the panel were: Linda Benedict (University of Missouri), John Bentley (Fort Valley State College), Patricia Calvert (USDA Extension Service), Karla Chambers (farmer, Corvallis, Oreg.), Stella Coakley (Oregon State University), Doris Crowley (University of Delaware), Richard Hill (PORTLAND OREGONIAN), George Keller (Oregon State University), Bob Stebbins (Oregon State University), Warren Hovland and Ron Cameron (Oregon State University, panel moderators), and Taylor. Meg Ashman (University of Vermont) presided over the session.

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## **'REUBEN BRIGHAM' AWARD RECIPIENT GIVES COMMUNICATORS ADVICE AT ACE MEETING**

"Pull the dean's beard," former WASHINGTON POST reporter Ward Sinclair told an audience of over 200 communicators from federal and state agricultural institutions from around the world on July 19. "Force the policy makers to think about the real world."

Sinclair said he was discouraged at the lack of information these organizations were distributing on low-input farming and other subjects.

Sinclair, who covered agriculture for the WASHINGTON POST from 1980 until he quit the newspaper last September to farm full time in Pennsylvania, addressed ACE's 1989 international meeting, held in Portland, Ore., July 16-19.

ACE honored Sinclair with its "Reuben Brigham Award," the highest honor the organization can give a non-member.

Having worked on newspapers throughout the United States and Mexico, and covering the U.S. Congress just before taking the agricultural beat, he said covering agriculture "was the best assignment I've ever had." Sinclair said he was discouraged that more major newspapers do not have full time agricultural coverage and said agriculture still hasn't caught the attention of the news media in this country.

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## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST NEEDED BY USDA'S FOREST SERVICE IN OREGON**

USDA's Forest Service has an opening for a GS-1035-9 public affairs specialist at the Siuslaw National Forest, Reedsport, Oregon.

Duties include assisting in evaluation and analysis of public comments on management issues; developing and presenting informational audio-visual programs including slide-tape and videotape programs; preparing and presenting speeches for special interest groups, school and church groups, and the general public; and developing written materials, such as feature stories, news releases, and magazine articles that transmit information concerning the nature and purpose of Oregon Dunes NRA program, projects, policies, and activities.

Qualifications include 1 year of specialized experience in or directly related to the line of work of the position to be filled.

Contact: Jewel Dahl, USDA-Forest Service, ATTN: Personnel, P.O. Box 1148, Covallis, OR 97339. Telephone is 503-757-4509.

Closing date is August 10.

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## **AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY AND USDA COOPERATIVELY PUBLISH THREE NEW BOOKLETS**

The American Express Company, in cooperation with USDA, has published three booklets that cover different financial phases of life.

"Getting Started" (436V, 50 cents) discusses how to establish your financial identity by getting credit, opening bank accounts, and getting job benefits.

"Settling Down" (464V, 50 cents) focuses on the two-income household, how to set goals and manage your mutual and separate money.

"Keeping Pace" (468V, 50 cents) gives tips on managing crisis and change in a two-income household.

For copies of any of these publications, send your name, address, and fees, along with the titles and item numbers to R. Woods, Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

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## **LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY AND USDA COMMUNICATORS STRESS SHARING INFORMATION**

Communicators from land grant universities and USDA, participating in a July 17 seminar on "Using Research to Reduce Risk in Communications," saw a need to share more of their communication research information with each other.

The seminar was created to discuss ways in which research into demographics and similar information could help communicators prepare information in the most acceptable way for their target audience.

After discussion about what some were doing in research to reach their various audiences, other communicators at the session thought one of the most important things they could do would be to swap information research with each other. That way, they could use it to help reach their own audiences.

One communicator said USDA should take on the job of collecting the communications research performed by state extension service information staffs, synthesizing it, and sending it back to all state extension information directors.

Then Iowa, for example, would know that Illinois had just surveyed its farmers about their use of zero-tillage planting and had the results available. Iowa could use Illinois's results to prepare brochures, public service announcements and similar information tools aimed at farmers without having to perform similar research themselves. Iowa's savings could be used for other information work within Iowa or returned to the state treasury.

Eventually, Illinois would benefit from research other states had done. If projected to all states, they could save considerable money and work more effectively.

The seminar was part of "Risk-Taking in Communications" sessions at the 1989 annual conference of Agricultural Communicators in Education in Portland, Oreg., July 16-19. More than 200 communicators from around the world attended.

Publications editors from five Midwest state extension offices founded ACE in 1913 to find better ways to get agricultural research information developed by state extension information offices to farmers and others.

Panelists at the seminar were Barb Abbott (Iowa State University), Cliff Sherer (Cornell University), Larry Whiting (Ohio State University), and Paul Yarbrough (Cornell University).

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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING COMMUNICATION EVENTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

September 12-15:

RADIO & TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTORS ASSN. INTERNAT'L CONFERENCE & EXHIBIT

Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Theme: "News Center '89"

Contact: 800-225-8183

October 12-13:

PRACTICAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATION

Garden Plaza Hotel, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Contact: Society for Technical Communication, P.O. Box 1314, Oak Ridge, TN 37831-1314

October 22-25:

COMMUNICATION OFFICERS OF STATE DEPTS. OF AGRICULTURE ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOPS

Atlantic City, New Jersey

Contact: Carol Shipp, Pub. Inf. Officer, NJ Dept. of Ag, 609-292-8896

November 9-12:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FARM BROADCASTERS ANNUAL MEETING

Kansas City, Missouri

Contact: 612-224-0508

December 6-8:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Rosslyn Westpark Hotel, Arlington, Virginia

Contact: Deborah Trocchi, NAGC Exec. Director, 703-823-4821

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